The Collectivism of Al-Qaeda and the Taliban
By Nevin Gussack

In the late 1990s and early 2000s, al-Qaeda became a household word associated with the gravest, bloodiest atrocities committed against Americans and their allies in the developing world. One of al-Qaeda's largest state sponsors were the Taliban rulers in Afghanistan. Both espoused a radical, fundamentalist Islamic collectivism which opposed Marxism and capitalism. However, it should be noted that the critique of capitalism as espoused by al-Qaeda and the Taliban assumed much of the rhetoric of Third World Marxists. In addition, despite strategic retreats by the Taliban regarding Western and domestic private investments, its government embarked on developing a collectivist system where the economy was strictly controlled. Adherence to and the molding of an Islamic society and international revolution was of paramount importance to the Taliban. Lastly, despite the distrust of Marxists, the Taliban and al-Qaeda also forged alliances and ties with Russia, Red China, Cuba, and North Korea based on the mutual advantages derived from such relations. Such benefits included access to hard currency, weapons, and the common goal of injuring American and Israeli interests. This paper will discuss the points mentioned in the preceding sentences.

Al-Qaeda leaders also left open the door for the joint cooperation between Islamists and socialists as a means of injuring American and Zionist power. Bin Laden stated in a 2003 speech: *"They (US soldiers) only fight for capitalists, usury takers, and the merchants of arms and oil, including the gang of crime at the White House…Under these circumstances, there will be no harm if the interests of Muslims converge with the interests of the socialists in the fight against the crusaders, despite our belief in the infidelity of socialists. The jurisdiction of the socialists and those rulers has fallen a long time ago. Socialists are infidels wherever they are, whether they are in Baghdad or Aden. The fighting, which is waging and which will be waged these days, is very much like the fighting of Muslims against the Byzantine in the past. And the convergence of interests is not detrimental. The Muslims' fighting against the Byzantine converged with the interests of the Persians. And this was not detrimental to the companions of the prophet."*[1]

The former al-Qaeda leader Osama Bin Laden made a speech in 2010, which was overlaid with Marxist undertones: *"Thus the bitter truth has become clear; namely, the world is hijacked by the owners of giant corporations. They are leading this world to the precipice. The policies of the world today are not planned by the wise to promote the interests of mankind but by the momentum provided by the greedy looters of oil, warmongers, and the wild beasts of capitalism…Owners of giant corporations and their agent politicians must be held accountable and be punished in order to stop harming humanity. This can easily be done by the US people, especially those who were harmed by Hurricane Katrina, and the unemployed as a result of the economic crisis. The perpetrators are living among them, especially in Washington, New York, and Texas. Look at their stand at the Denmark conference. Their stand demonstrated their deception and lack of seriousness in exerting the necessary effort to treat climate change, apart from dissociating themselves from the previous disasters and their refusal to pay compensations*

[1] "Text of Bin Ladin's Message Broadcast by Al-Jazeera" Al-Jazeera TV February 11, 2003

to the victims. They continue to insist on tampering with world climate to collect money, even if this is done at the expanse of the souls of our children."[2]

The Red Chinese also forged alliances with Middle Eastern socialist and Islamic regimes and *"liberation"* movements since the 1950s. Beijing saw this alliance as a revolutionary front to roll back Western political and military influence in the critical region of the Middle East. Islamist terrorists would prove to be reliable, highly motivated terror cadres who were willing to die to injure the United States itself. China provided copies of the Soviet SA-7 SAMs to the Taliban and al Qaeda before and after the attacks of 9/11. Chinese PLA forces also reportedly trained al Qaeda and Taliban forces during this time period.[3] China's Premier Zhu Rongji joked to businessmen at the Bao Forum for Asia that: *"Japan bought many huge buildings in New York, but luckily they didn't buy the World Trade Center. If he had bought them, now the Japanese would be sadder than the Americans."* Executives and politicians were reportedly *"roaring with laughter."*[4] The Chinese paid Osama Bin Laden several million dollars for unexploded American-made cruise missiles left over from the 1998 attacks on al Qaeda camps. The Libyan al-Qaeda agent Lased Ben Heni admitted *"With these weapons he (Bin Laden) has boosted his financial resources. From every part of the world, businessmen who hate Americans have come to study American missile strategy. In particular, businessmen have come from China. He works a great deal with China. He's got good relations with them."*[5] The Chinese propaganda apparatus also produced DVDs which praised the 9/11 attacks as humbling the arrogant imperialist power of the United States. The agencies responsible for producing these DVDs were the Xinhua information agency, Beijing Television and China Central Television.

One Beijing Television documentary called Attack America had this to say about the al-Qaeda aggression on 9/11: *"This is the America the whole world has wanted to see. Blood debts have been repaid in blood. America has bombed other countries and used its hegemony to deny the natural rights of others without paying the price. Who until now has dared to avenge the hurts inflicted by unaccountable Americans?"* Another Chinese film stated: *"Look at the panic in their faces as they wipe off the dust and crawl out of their strong buildings - now just a heap of rubble. We will never fear these people again, they have been shown to be soft-bellied paper tigers."* Another video stated *"We guys are all Americans, our government is used to bullying people. We guys always have our hands on too much, this time our own people got hurt."*[6] In May 2004, Chinese intelligence front companies assisted al Qaeda in raising and laundering money.[7]

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[2] "Al-Qa'idah Leader Bin-Ladin Gives Speech on Climate Change Dangers" Al-Jazeera January 29, 2010

[3] "Chinese Military Provided Training to Taliban/al Qaeda" China Reform Monitor June 26, 2002 Accessed From: http://63.123.226.152/crm/crm452.htm

[4] "Zhu Rongji Jokes Publicly About the September 11 Attacks" China Reform Monitor April 22, 2002 Accessed From: http://63.123.226.152/crm/crm442.htm

[5] "Beijing Paid bin Laden for Unexploded US Cruise Missiles" China Reform Monitor October 22, 2001 Accessed From: http://63.123.226.152/crm/crm410.htm

[6] McElroy, Damien. "Beijing Produces Videos Glorifying Terrorist Attacks on 'Arrogant' US" Sunday Telegraph November 4, 2001 page 32.

[7] McGuire, D.J. "China Bought American Cruise Missiles from al-Qaeda" Epoch Times December 5, 2005 Accessed From: http://www.theepochtimes.com/news/5-12-5/35329.html

There were some indications that the Cubans, Chinese, and North Koreans later linked up with the Taliban and Al-Qaeda to hasten their mutual goal of the downfall of the United States. Mohammed Atta reportedly may have met secretly with Cuban undercover agents shortly after his arrival in the United States during the year 2000. Federal investigators alleged that high-level officials of Cuba's biological warfare program who allegedly spoke with Atta at a Miami motel. Federal investigators suspected that Atta's Cuban contact was a top Defense Ministry officer with personal ties to Castro who entered the United States under cover of assignment to a Cuban government delegation escorting Elian Gonzalez's two grandmothers. The grandmothers were allegedly coming to the United States to mediate the controversial custody battle occurring at that time.[8] An al-Qaeda defector noted in 2000 that North Korean and Cuban troops provided assistance in training camps located in Kunar province, in northeastern Afghanistan. The North Koreans allegedly brought chemical weapons and stored them in caves and sun baked mud houses.[9] Yossef Bodansky claimed that North Korea and Osama Bin Laden concluded a single weapons deal consisting of North Korean-made anthrax samples. The 1999 State Department report titled Overview of State-Sponsored Terrorism noted that North Korea maintained ties with al-Qaeda. [10] China provided copies of the Soviet SA-7 SAMs to the Taliban and al Qaeda before and after the attacks of 9/11. Chinese PLA forces also reportedly trained al Qaeda and Taliban forces during this time period.[11] Al-Qaeda reportedly maintained links with two communist groups: Colombian FARC and the *Sendero Luminiso* (Shining Path) in Peru. Pakistani documents also reported that al-Qaeda maintained relations with the communist Popular Revolutionary Army (EPR) of Mexico. The documents revealed that al-Qaeda viewed the EPR as allies in attacks against targets *"especially those of the United States and Britain."* EPR also agreed to cooperate in efforts to smuggle al-Qaeda operatives into the United States through Tijuana Mexico.[12] Cuban agents reportedly cooperated with al-Qaeda operatives in the Western Sahara. The point man for the Cuba-al-Qaeda connection was Havana's Ambassador to Pakistan Gustavo Machin Gomez.[13] Until 2014, Cuban state banks also provided al-Qaeda with the facilities to deposit funds.[14] Some high level Cuban officials even openly expressed sympathy for al-Qaeda and called upon that terrorist organization to heighten the campaign to murder Americans. For example, Cuban Attorney General Juan Escalona voiced his hope that captured

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[8] Arostegui , Martin "Fidel May Be Part of Terror Campaign" Insight on the News November 9, 2001 Accessed From: http://www.latinamericanstudies.org/us-cuba/terror-campaign.htm

[9] Gannon, Kathy. "Bomb Plots: Investigations Point to Bin Laden's Terrorism Camps" Associated Press March 4, 2000

[10] Triplett, William C. Rogue State (Regnery Publishing, 2004) page 175.

[11] "Chinese Military Provided Training to Taliban/al Qaeda" China Reform Monitor June 26, 2002 Accessed From: http://63.123.226.152/crm/crm452.htm

[12] Thomas, Gordon. "INVASION USA Osama's exploits south of border Al-Qaida in league with Mexican radicals in plot to penetrate U.S., says MI6 report" May 10, 2006 Accessed From: http://www.worldnetdaily.com/news/article.asp?ARTICLE_ID=50130

[13] Westerman, Toby. "Al-Qaeda's Cuban Connection: Terrorism with a Latin Beat" October 31, 2011 Accessed From: http://inatoday.com/alqcubconnec10282011.htm

[14] De Luca, Sebastian. "Cuba's Role in Supporting Terrorism (ENG & ESP)" Center for Security Policy April 16, 2015 Accessed From: https://www.centerforsecuritypolicy.org/2015/04/16/cubas-role-in-supporting-terrorism-eng-esp/

al-Qaeda operatives would escape from Guantanamo and kill American soldiers and officers: *"I hope 15 or 20…get out and kill them."*[15] According to Hugo Chavez's former pilot, Major Juan Diaz Castillo, the Venezuelan government provided $1 million to al-Qaeda after the attacks of 9/11. Diaz also reported that Venezuela transferred $1 million to the Taliban via Caracas' Ambassador in India Walter Marquez.[16] Until 2001, the Russian Federation transferred weapons to the Taliban via the arms dealer Victor Bout.[17] Bout remained an ideological communist devoted to injuring the interests of the United States. He admitted to a group of Colombian communist FARC officials: *"**FARC officers**: 'We're fighting against the United States.' **Bout:** 'Look, they're after me too.'"* Bout and the FARC officials also reportedly spoke about the *"shared ideology of communism and fighting against the Americans."*[18] The Red Chinese opposed the imposition of UN sanctions on Taliban ruled Afghanistan in 2000. Beijing also signed a cooperation pact with the Taliban in September 2001. After the attacks of 9/11, the Chinese PLA front company Huawei also constructed a telecommunications facility in Taliban-held Kabul Afghanistan. In 2002, Taliban leaders such as Ustad Khalil visited Red China and met with Communist Party cadres.[19] Over 3,000 Chinese PLA troops crossed into Afghanistan to allegedly assist the Taliban in October 2001.[20] In November 2005, North Korea sold SAMs to the Taliban. An al-Qaeda delegation journeyed to North Korea through Iran to make the purchase.[21]

Many Taliban officials and military personnel originally served in the old dictatorship of the Soviet puppet communist party called the People's Democratic Party (PDPA). After all, the communists traded one form of collectivism for another. Others were tempted by the power and privileges bestowed by the Taliban. Others worked for the SVR and infiltrated the Taliban for Moscow's anti-American foreign policy. Former KGB General Oleg Kalugin noted on the BBC World News TV program that Soviet intelligence trained more operatives of al-Qaeda than the CIA.[22] The communist commander of the artillery forces General Shahnawaz Tanai switched his loyalties to the Taliban. Other Afghan PDPA military and Khad officers followed suit. Tanai's forces also provided the Taliban with massive stores of Soviet-era weaponry. Some observers such as Anthony Arnold argued that Tanai's defection was an SVR provocation designed to assist the anti-American Taliban. In fact, many Taliban mullahs, intelligence officers, and

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[15] Westerman, Toby. "Interpol Courts Castro" Cubanet January 22, 2002 Accessed From: http://www.cubanet.org/htdocs/CNews/y02/jan02/22e8.htm

[16] Moore, Art. "Defector: Chavez Gave $1 Million to Al-Qaeda" Worldnetdaily January 7, 2003 Accessed From: http://www.wnd.com/2003/01/16592/

[17] Leitzinger, Antero. "The Russian Roots of Islamic Terrorism" Eurasian Politician March 2002 Accessed From: http://www.freerepublic.com/focus/news/1666759/posts

[18] "Victor Bout: Capturing 'The Merchant of Death'" CBSNews November 18, 2010 Accessed From: http://www.cbsnews.com/news/viktor-bout-capturing-the-merchant-of-death/

[19] McGuire, D.J. "How Communist China Supports anti-US Terrorists" Association for Asian Research September 15, 2005 Accessed From: http://www.asianresearch.org/articles/2733.html

[20] Nyquist, J.R. "China Supports bin Laden and the Taliban" Financial Sense October 10, 2001 Accessed From: http://www.rense.com/general15/chinasupports.htm

[21] "North Korea Sold Missiles to Taliban" Chosun Ilbo September 16, 2015 Accessed From: http://english.chosun.com/site/data/html_dir/2010/07/28/2010072800299.html

[22] Leitzinger, Antero. "The Russian Roots of Islamic Terrorism" Eurasian Politician March 2002 Accessed From: http://www.freerepublic.com/focus/news/1666759/posts

military personnel were "former communist military and security agents who have grown up beards and adopted new names and identities replete with the title 'mullah.'" The Taliban artillery commander was the communist Afghan military intelligence officer Shah Sawar. The Taliban intelligence service chief Mohammed Akbar formerly headed a department of the Khad. The Taliban air force commander Mohammed Gilani also served the communists.[23] Julian West observed that "*When the Taliban captured Kabul in September 1996, the bureaucratic structure of the defeated Soviet-backed government of President Najibullah was largely left intact. Ministers and department heads were replaced with black-turbaned mullahs loyal to the Taliban. The KHAD was renamed Istakh Barat and a cleric, Qari Amadullah, was appointed as its head."*[24]

The Taliban also engaged in a Soviet-style deception campaign where the movement was divided into "moderate" and "hardline" factions. The purpose of this campaign was twofold: A) to attract American financial support for the fictitious "*moderate*" faction, which would then be transferred to the real, anti-American Taliban. B) To dupe the United States into believing that Taliban unity was weakening. A former senior member of the Taliban Abdul Salam Zaeef recalled that *"two days after the hostilities began, General Omar visited me.* ***He had two demands: he said that as a senior leader and representative of the Taliban I should assist in separating the 'fundamentalist' from the 'moderate' Taliban. This, he said, would ultimately help the Taliban and would keep the movement alive. In reality, his intention was to split the Taliban into factions in order to weaken them. I was supposed to lead moderate Taliban against Amir ul-Mu'mineen. He assured me that they would support me financially and logistically****. This is the suggestion that the new administration of the United States under President Obama is working on. Bush, while he was still in power, and together with Britain and Karzai, also tried to do this during his seven years. They think that the Taliban exist for the sake of money or power, so logically it would seem that they can be destroyed with money and power. In reality, the Taliban movement is one based on Islamic ideology, struggling for holy jibad under the principles of itta'at or obedience and samar or listening, as well as that of dialogue. The thought of dividing them into moderates and hardliners is a useless and reckless aim."*[25]

Despite efforts to attract the investment of domestic and foreign businessmen and multinational corporations, the Taliban espoused anti-capitalism, anti-Americanism, and imposed strict controls over the private market. In March 1999, shops in Mazar-e-Sharif were closed by the Taliban for overcharging and violating market price controls.[26] In April 2001, it was noted in the Kabul Times that "*The Herat municipality with the cooperation of pious inhabitants has endeavoured for the control and inspection of market prices. The offenders of price hikes were given Islamic recommendation."*[27]

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[23] Sam Vaknin. "Afghan Myths" Accessed From: http://samvak.tripod.com/pp100.html
[24] West, Julian. "Taliban spy web makes infiltrating difficult" The Washington Times November 02, 2001 page A1.
[25] Abd al-Salam Zaif. My Life with the Taliban (Columbia University Press New York 2010) Accessed From: https://archive.org/stream/LifeWithTheTaliban/LifeWithTheTaliban_djvu.txt
[26] "Programme Summary of Afghan Balkh Radio News 1300 GMT 01 March 999" Radio Voice of Shari'ah March 3, 1999
[27] "Afghan: Taleban official comments on services provided by Herat municipality" The Kabul Times April 27, 2001

Even before the attacks of 9/11, the Taliban leadership and its propaganda apparatus verbally assaulted capitalism, the West, and the United States. The same newspaper commented in December 2000 that "*The United States is the greatest capitalist power of the world, which has obtained its huge monopoly of capital from the pains and exploitation of those countries and nations that have been oppressed and kept backward. It will not be a matter of surprise that the protection of the interests of the United States would lead to further intensification of the level of deprivation, poverty, pain, backwardness, disease and a variety of political, economic and social linkages...*"[28] In March 2000, the Taliban publication Shariat commented: "*With a study of the women's rights movement in the world, one sees that after World War II when big capitalists abused European women, who endured much oppression, they were forced to rise up against factory owners in order to protect their dignity and chastity. They demanded respect for their dignity and human rights.*"[29]

The Taliban also fused its anti-Americanism with anti-Zionism. In February 2001, the Taleban newspaper Anis stated: *"…the usurper and anti-Islam Zionist regime is under the direct protection of the American capitalists and owners of large companies. Even inside the White House most of the personalities who formulate US foreign policy are orthodox Jews.*"[30]

The Afghan Taliban newspaper Etefaq-e Islam stated in October 2001 that "*A question that comes to an inquisitive mind in this regard is: In what and where are the roots of all the fuss and hue and cry made by a number of industrial and capitalist countries after the incidents which took place in the United States? Why are the United States and its military and economic partners so worried and anxious? The true fact is that the concept of terrorism has an unbreakable link to the mechanism and structure of the capitalist world and it has been recognized as one of the most fundamental tools of the Western world in its fight against its enemies. The word of terrorism and its utilization has its base in the system of the capitalist societies. It is in fact the capitalist countries, which have always used and are using this weapon for reaching their political and economic objectives in their fight against other countries and in particular against the Third World. The murder and terrorising of hundreds of political, religious and cultural personalities in every corner of the world has been carried out by the United States and the hellish organization of the CIA. This fact is so obvious and clear today that there is no need for explanation. The people of the world have for a very long time been familiar with such measures adopted by the United States and the Zionists.*"[31] The same newspaper commented in October 2001 that "*As a country at the zenith of 'imperialist' capitalism, the United States is only and only reliant on the interests of its multinationals and monopolies on the world level. She is making every attempt to establish control over all natural resources and cheap manpower all over the globe.*"[32]

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[28] "Taleban paper says Afghan people will not give in to US pressure" Etefaq-e Islam December 28, 2000

[29] "Taleban newspaper criticizes resolution passed by women's rights groups" Shari'at March 28, 2000

[30] "Afghan: Taleban paper assails US, Russian 'barbaric' policy of sanctions" Anis February 9, 2001

[31] "Taleban weekly says terrorism has roots in capitalist societies" Etefaq-e Islam October 9, 2001

[32] "Afghan Taleban newspaper says USA in pursuit of instability in Asia" Shari'at October 22, 2001

The Taliban envoy to Pakistan Mola Abdol Salam Zayif stated in November 2001 that *"American imperialism, emerging as the most savage power after the World War II in which it reduced to ashes two big islands of Japan, had proven its credentials as candidate to play the role of international mercenary for the global capital. Thus, the capitalist world selected the American as their watchdog on the basis of their savageness in the World War II. Barbarism and tyranny are hallmarks of American life and history. To further their capitalist objectives, free market economy has been imposed on the world through carrot and stick policy, bullying adamant nations into submission and bulldozing their way all over the world through their puppet international organizations and monetary institutions like the UN, IMF, World Bank etc…The American defeat at the hands of the Vietnamese was a great setback to their leadership claims and qualities in the eyes of the capitalist world due to its utter failure to deliver the goods despite its extreme savageness in the war. Had there been any formidable candidate for the leadership of the capitalist world, the American gangster would have been ditched and a new 'Rambo' would have been crowned…"*[33]

Concurrent with the anti-capitalist propaganda came Taliban efforts to attract Western and domestic companies to invest in its economy. Such investments served several purposes: a) to enhance the international credibility of the Taliban as a viable business partner of the United States and the West. b) Acquire hard currency and technologies for the Taliban and c) to serve as respectable faces of a growing Taliban lobby in the United States. In April 1997, the Taliban government-controlled Radio Voice of Shari'ah noted that *"Now that, with the blessing of God, over 85 per cent of Afghanistan's territory, including the capital, is under the sovereignty of the Koran, peace and security is being restored and there is no risk to traders or national or international capitalists as regards their lives or property. With complete confidence and with a guarantee, they can embark on private business, investing in small or large projects for their own benefit and for the benefit of our compatriots, for whom they will provide work…We hope that investors realize that here in Afghanistan satisfactory, legal and lawful conditions have been provided for their work and activities. The gates of Islamic Afghanistan are open for the arrival of capitalists and private domestic or foreign investors."*[34] In November 2000, the Taliban newspaper Hewad noted that *"Capitalists and businessmen are trying to serve their society through investing their capital and through their personal resources. Some factories have either resumed production recently or have been newly set up."*[35]

Some American multinationals cautiously made overtures to the Taliban in an effort to exploit Afghan resources. The Taliban also utilized the art of establishing contradictions amongst competing capitalist interests in the West. This was a strategy typical of the communists and the Islamists. The Taliban sought to extract the maximum of advantages in these diplomatic maneuvers with American businessmen. Ahmed Rashid reported that Unocal established a training school for the Taliban in Kandahar. Rashid noted that "*Both the competing oil companies—Bridas (the Argentinean multinational) and Unocal—had very close relations with the Taliban. They took their leaders on junkets to their home bases, they gave them substantial help in the form of office equipment, and they gave medical treatment to many of their leaders. Unocal set up a training school for the Taliban in Kandahar. So there was a very close*

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33 "Taleban envoy warns US of dire consequences" Frontier Post November 7, 2001

[34] "Taleban calls for foreign investment to revitalize 'backward' economy" Radio Voice of Shari'ah, Kabul April 3, 1997

[35] "Recently established footwear factory plans expansion" Hewad November 15, 2000

relationship. ***Even though the Taliban was very successfully playing both of these oil companies against one another, they never actually signed a deal with either one. They set up a modern version of bazaar politics where you play off one bidder against another****. I think the relationship soured after the capture of Kabul by the Taliban in 1996."* Rashid also commented that "*The U.S. had a number of reasons to support the Taliban. One was that the Taliban was vehemently anti-Iran and anti-Shia, and this was the time of the dual containment policy when the U.S. was trying to hold in Iran and Iraq. And the Taliban fitted the bill very well. Secondly, the Taliban was being supported by two U.S. allies in the region — Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. The third reason is that the U.S. wanted to build this pipeline. There was a lot of support from the Pentagon and the State Department for the Unocal effort."*[36] The anti-Americanism of the Taliban was initially downplayed as a result of the desire to invest in Afghanistan.

In conclusion, this paper documents the well-known fact of the alliance between communism and radical Islam. This relationship was targeted against the United States, the West, and Israel. However, many of our political leaders in the Obama and Bush Administration ignored this connection. Convinced that the Cold War ended, the Obama and Bush Administrations sought to partner with Beijing and Moscow in the "*war on terrorism*." With the teetering lack of stability of the Iraqi and Afghan governments, radical Islamic forces threaten to darken the horizon in the Middle East. The resources of Beijing, Moscow, and other anti-American nations greased the skids of this shift of power in this critical region.

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[36] "National Security and War Profiteering The Great Game: Oil and Afghanistan An Interview with Ahmed Rashid" Multinational Monitor November 2001 Accessed From: http://multinationalmonitor.org/mm2001/01november/nov01interviewrashid.html